

House Bill 298  
April 9, 2013  
Presented by Paul Sihler  
Senate Fish and Game Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Paul Sihler, Administrator of the Field Services Division of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). I am here on behalf of the Director to provide information on House Bill 298.

The Department appreciates the intentions of the sponsor to explore ways to promote good relations among landowners, hunters, and FWP. Seeking ways to improve landowner, hunter and FWP relations is a priority of Director Hagener for the upcoming biennium.

I want to call your attention to another statute that seeks to address these issues as well. Under MCA 87-1-269, the Governor is required to "appoint a committee of persons interested in issues related to hunters, anglers, landowners, and outfitters, including but not limited to the hunting access enhancement program, the fishing access enhancement program, landowner-hunter relations, outfitting industry issues, and other issues related to private lands and public wildlife. The committee must have broad representation of landowners, outfitter, and sportspersons."

Created in 1993 and commonly known as the Private Land/Public Wildlife Council, it has had a long and respected history of working very publicly and transparently on contentious issues during the interim.

Again, the Department appreciates the intentions of the sponsor in seeking improved relations among landowners, hunters, and FWP. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.